

# Delaware receives final approval on ESSA state plan

Delaware has received final approval from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) for its Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan, Delaware Secretary of Education Susan Bunting announced today.

Today's ESSA plan approval comes just days after the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) submitted an updated version of the plan to USED to reflect changes based on federal guidance, public feedback and feedback received from the Governor's Office.

"Delaware worked together to create a very thoughtful and effective plan, and we appreciate that USED sees the value in how we've designed our systems to improve student outcomes," Bunting said. "Now the harder work begins as we continue to work across agencies and with stakeholders to support our districts and charter schools as they focus on implementing Delaware's ESSA plan to benefit our students."

Delaware was the first of 16 states and the District of Columbia to opt to submit their completed ESSA state plan by the first deadline on April 3. It is also the only state so far to have had its plan approved.

"Delaware has always been a state of firsts, so it should be no surprise that theirs was both the first state plan submitted and the first approved under ESSA," said U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

ESSA is the main federal law governing funding of public education and gives states more flexibility and more state and local control over the accountability process. In December 2015, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) as the Every Student Succeeds

Act (ESSA). Under ESSA, states are required to outline their plans for spending federal funds, for measuring the skills students learn and for supporting students in making academic progress. ESSA gives the U.S. Secretary of Education final approval of each state's plan.

Implementation of the programs outlined in Delaware's ESSA plan will begin during the 2017-18 school year.

"Delaware has created a strong plan that makes certain all students have access to a quality education and an equal opportunity to succeed," said Delaware Governor John Carney. "Every student will benefit from the work outlined in ESSA, especially our neediest students in the City of Wilmington. I am proud of how the state continues to join forces to help all Delaware students, and I am looking forward to lending my support to this work in every way possible."

Last month, Governor Carney announced the creation of a Wilmington-based team to support struggling schools in the City of Wilmington. The Delaware Department of Education's new Office of Improvement & Innovation will be led by Dorrell Green – a long-time Delaware educator with a proven track record in school improvement. Green began his work with the Department of Education on August 1.

The Department is also working closely with district and charter schools to make certain they have the supports they need to fulfill the ESSA state plan.

"We are excited to learn that the Delaware ESSA plan has been approved," said Heath Chasanov, Superintendent of Woodbridge School District and the 2017-18 President of the Chief School Officers Association. "We recognize the hard work that the Department of Education has undertaken to meet the requirements of the application process. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Department to implement the changes for the betterment of our students."

This past year, as Delaware drafted its ESSA plan, the state collected more than 1,000 comments and suggestions from families, community members and other education stakeholders through a series of community conversations and discussion groups, the Governor's ESSA Advisory Committee, and online surveys and submissions. The department's [framework document](#) provided additional context around the work.

"The development of the ESSA plan was the result of a broad-based team effort," said Delaware's Deputy Secretary of Education Karen Field Rogers, who oversaw the coordination of the state's plan. "Now that Delaware's ESSA plan has been approved, we will continue to work with our districts, charter schools and our stakeholders to improve the education that each of our students receives."

The remaining states' ESSA plans are due to USED on September 18.

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